



Submit photos online at:

www.coastweekend.com/cwphotocontest

Official Rules:

Who can enter?

- Photographers of all ages; must be residents of Oregon or Washington state. Limit five entries per person.

What photographs are eligible?

- All subjects are welcome.
- Print entries: Prints may be color or black-and-white, unframed, no larger than 8"x10". Each entry must have the completed entry form (photocopies are OK) attached to the back of the photo. Photos will be available to pick up after Monday, Jan. 11, 2016.

- Digital entries: Digital photographs may be color or black-and-white and must be JPEGs, maximum of 5MB, 300 dpi resolution and at least 5"x7" in image size. Submit photos online at www.coastweekend.com/cwphotocontest

Submission deadline:

- Entries will be accepted Nov. 18 through Dec. 13, 2015.

- Top 10 photographs will be published in Coast Weekend Thursday, Jan. 7, 2016.

- Gift cards will be awarded for first-, second- and third-place winners, plus a People's Choice winner voted for online Dec. 14 to Dec. 20.

Other contest rules:

- All photographs entered may be used in future publications by the EO Media Group
- Each entry must include the entrant's name, home address, age, a description of the photograph and daytime phone number.

NAME: _____
 ADDRESS: _____
 CITY, STATE, ZIP: _____
 PHONE: _____
 E-MAIL: _____

Description of Photo: _____

Digitally enhanced photo: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Photographer's signature: _____

Submit online at www.coastweekend.com/cwphotocontest or bring print entries along with completed entry forms to 949 Exchange St. in Astoria, or mail them to The Daily Astorian, Coast Weekend Photo Contest P.O. Box 210, Astoria, OR 97103

Wild Side

By LYNETTE RAE McADAMS

Common and widespread throughout the temperate northern regions of Europe, Scandinavia, northern Asia, North Africa and North America, *Amanita muscaria* is perhaps the world's most iconic mushroom, appearing often in art and literature (especially children's books and folk tales) since at least the Renaissance.

Though the red variety is most often depicted, this fungus also flowers in yellow, orange and tawny pink; in every case, it emerges from the ground still encased in a universal veil, which, in its nascent button state, resem-

bles a ball of cooked oatmeal, nestled on the forest floor. As it matures, a snow white stalk rises up, topped with a deeply hued cap that bears the flaky remnants of the veil, creating its signature, spotted appearance.

The common name, fly agaric, denotes one of this mushroom's prized characteristics, particularly for ancient foragers: When the fresh cap is crumbled into milk, it acts as an attractant to houseflies, first stupefying them, then causing death.

For centuries, humans have also valued *Amanita muscaria* for religious, medicinal and recreational purposes. Containing psychoactive alka-



Photo by Lynette Rae McAdams

Known to fruit well into December, "fairy rings" of the *Amanita muscaria*, which grow in circular patterns, can be a common woodland sight.

loids, ingestion of this mushroom has a long history of use in the shamanistic practices of Siberia and northern Europe, as well as India and Iran, where it was revered as a sacred hallucinogen.

But take note: Belonging to the same family as the fatal Death Cap and Destroying Angel mushrooms, while *A. muscaria* isn't as toxic, it can cause severe psychotropic poisoning and must be handled with extreme caution or, better yet, avoided entirely; this is a mushroom best enjoyed with the eyes alone.

On a lighter note, for its mesmerizing red color, its tendency to bloom late into the

Amanita muscaria
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year, and its partnership with evergreen conifers, the fly agaric is also recognized as the "Christmas mushroom," and has become a symbol of good fortune and prosperity worldwide, featuring prominently on Christmas and New Year's cards and ornaments since the Victorian era.

Known to fruit well into December, "fairy rings" of this mushroom, which grow in circular patterns, can be a common woodland sight this time of year, and some ethnobotanists suggest they may have evoked the idea for the brightly wrapped presents that encircle our modern Christmas trees. In fact, one prominent professor of botany at Harvard University is so sure about the link between this psychedelic mushroom and seasonal folklore, that he delivers an annual lecture portraying Santa — that jolly fellow dressed all in red with white trim — as a northern shaman whose reindeer only "fly" because of the hallucinogenic properties of this fascinating, intoxicating fungus.



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